

Transitions

Transitions signal relationships between ideas such as: "Another example coming up—stay alert!" or "Here's an exception to my previous statement" or "Although this idea appears to be true, here's the real story." Basically, transitions provide the reader with directions for how to piece together your ideas into a logically coherent argument. Transitions are not just verbal decorations that embellish your paper by making it sound or read better. They are words with particular meanings that tell the reader to think and react in a particular way to your ideas. In providing the reader with these important cues, transitions help readers understand the logic of how your ideas fit together. Sometimes the transitions are called connectors and discourse markers:

Types of transitions

Now that you have a general idea of how to go about developing effective transitions in your writing, let us briefly discuss the types of transitions your writing will use. The types of transitions available to you are as diverse as the circumstances in which you need to use them. A transition can be a single word, a phrase, a sentence, or an entire paragraph. In each case, it functions the same way: first, the transition either directly summarizes the content of a preceding sentence, paragraph, or section or implies such a summary (by reminding the reader of what has come before). Then it helps the reader anticipate or comprehend the new information that you wish to present.

1. **Transitions between sections**—Particularly in longer works, it may be necessary to include transitional paragraphs that summarize for the reader the information just covered and specify the relevance of this information to the discussion in the following section.
2. **Transitions between paragraphs**—If you have done a good job of arranging paragraphs so that the content of one leads logically to the next, the transition will highlight a relationship that already exists by summarizing the previous paragraph and suggesting something of the content of the paragraph that follows. A transition between paragraphs can be a word or two (*however, for example, similarly*), a phrase, or a sentence. Transitions can be at the end of the first paragraph, at the beginning of the second paragraph, or in both places.
3. **Transitions within paragraphs**—As with transitions between sections and paragraphs, transitions within paragraphs act as cues by helping readers to anticipate what is coming before they read it. Within paragraphs, transitions tend to be single words or short phrases.

Transitional expressions

Effectively constructing each transition often depends upon your ability to identify words or phrases that will indicate for the reader the *kind* of logical relationships you want to convey. The table below should make it easier for you to find these words or phrases. Whenever you have trouble finding a word, phrase, or sentence to serve as an effective transition, refer to the information in the table for assistance. Look in the left column of the table for the kind of logical

relationship you are trying to express. Then look in the right column of the table for examples of words or phrases that express this logical relationship.

Keep in mind that each of these words or phrases may have a slightly different meaning. Consult a dictionary or writer's handbook if you are unsure of the exact meaning of a word or phrase.

LOGICAL RELATIONSHIP	TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSION
Similarity	also, in the same way, just as ... so too, likewise, similarly
Exception/Contrast	but, however, in spite of, on the one hand ... on the other hand, nevertheless, nonetheless, notwithstanding, in contrast, on the contrary, still, yet
Sequence/Order	first, second, third, ... next, then, finally
Time	after, afterward, at last, before, currently, during, earlier, immediately, later, meanwhile, now, recently, simultaneously, subsequently, then
Example	for example, for instance, namely, specifically, to illustrate
Emphasis	even, indeed, in fact, of course, truly
Place/Position	above, adjacent, below, beyond, here, in front, in back, nearby, there
Cause and Effect	accordingly, consequently, hence, so, therefore, thus
Additional Support or Evidence	additionally, again, also, and, as well, besides, equally important, further, furthermore, in addition, moreover, then
Conclusion/Summary	finally, in a word, in brief, briefly, in conclusion, in the end, in the final analysis, on the whole, thus, to conclude, to summarize, in sum, to sum up, in summary

1. Connectors:

- **Definition:** Connectors link different parts of a text or speech, operating at the discourse level. They help create coherence and flow by showing relationships between ideas.
- **Examples:**
 - *Addition:* "Moreover," "Furthermore," "In addition"
 - *Contrast:* "However," "On the other hand," "Nevertheless"
 - *Cause and Effect:* "Because," "Therefore," "As a result"
 - *Time:* "Meanwhile," "Subsequently," "Next"

- **Distinctive Feature:** Connectors operate at the discourse level and primarily serve to establish logical relationships between different ideas or parts of a text, guiding the reader through shifts in thought or emphasis.

2. Transitional Devices:

- **Definition:** Transitional devices, also called transition words or phrases, serve as bridges between sentences, paragraphs, or sections, operating at the discourse level. They guide readers through the logical progression of ideas.
- **Examples:**
 - *Sequential:* "First," "Secondly," "Finally"
 - *Comparison:* "Similarly," "Likewise," "In the same way"
 - *Contrast:* "However," "Conversely," "On the contrary"
 - *Illustration:* "For example," "In other words," "To illustrate"

Distinctive Feature: Transitional devices facilitate smooth transitions between different parts of a text, signaling shifts in focus, sequence, or perspective, and guiding the reader through the logical progression of ideas.

3. Discourse Markers:

- **Definition:** Discourse markers, also known as linking words or sentence connectors, signal relationships between sentences or paragraphs, operating at the discourse level. They help structure the text and guide readers.
- **Examples:**
 - *Addition:* "Furthermore," "Moreover," "Additionally"
 - *Contrast:* "However," "On the other hand," "Nevertheless"
 - *Summary:* "In conclusion," "To sum up," "Overall"
 - *Transition:* "Meanwhile," "Next," "As a result"

Distinctive Feature: Discourse markers play a key role in organizing the overall structure of a text, signaling transitions between different parts, summarizing key points, and guiding the reader through the flow of information. They operate at the discourse level and help to enhance coherence and readability.